



MRC ★ In Focus

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

SUMMER 2007

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One-Two Punch by Mother Nature Sends Three Kansas MRC Units Into Action

On the evening of Friday, May 4, a tornado almost 2 miles wide leveled the city of Greensburg, Kansas, leaving a wake of destruction 22 miles long. This powerful storm damaged or destroyed 90 percent of the town's buildings, killed 10 people, and injured dozens more.

That weekend, as the residents of Greensburg continued to clean up from the tornado, Kansans living 200 miles to the northeast were dealing with the aftermath of 9–11 inches of rain. Twenty-five counties declared local disaster emergencies, and more than 500 people were rescued from flooded homes in and around Topeka, Kansas.

By Tuesday, May 8, MRC units in three counties—Shawnee, Reno, and Sedgwick—were ready to activate volunteers. All three units were asked by emergency management officials to provide surge capacity staffing for tetanus clinics mobilized by local health departments.

In Shawnee County, the site of the flooding, nurses vaccinated between 160 and 180 people. Ten MRC volunteers assisted with drawing vaccine, while others, including non-medical volunteers, helped with clinic flow and paperwork.

Volunteers prepare to provide vaccinations from a tent and mobile health clinic.

Back in Greensburg, MRC volunteers traveled west from Reno and Sedgwick counties to provide tetanus shots to those who were at risk from digging through rubble.

“...volunteers spent more than 250 hours helping deliver more than 2,000 tetanus shots.”

With the majority of the town in ruins, volunteers worked from a tent in the front yard of the health department director's home. From there, they used bags, shopping carts, wagons, or whatever they could find to carry supplies as they walked up and down the streets to distribute vaccinations to residents and relief workers.

During that week, 26 MRC volunteers from three MRC units responded across the state of Kansas.

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Tetanus shots are delivered to those in need by any means possible—even a shopping cart.



National Notes

Dear MRC Leaders, Volunteers,
and Colleagues,

September is National Preparedness Month. This nationwide effort encourages all Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses, and schools. It highlights the importance of emergency preparedness and promotes individual involvement through events and activities across the nation. The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action.

It is imperative that we—the leaders, members, and supporters of the Medical Reserve Corps—not only educate our community members on preparedness, but also serve by example. Be sure to be ready yourself by putting together an emergency supply kit (for your home, work, and car), making a family emergency plan, and being informed about different threats. Only when we

are ready ourselves will we be better able to serve others in an emergency.

During the month of September, I also encourage you to highlight the role of the MRC within your community—during a disaster and throughout the year. As partners with Citizen Corps and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, we have the opportunity to build awareness for the MRC while assisting our neighbors become better prepared. To learn more, please visit www.ready.gov, and be sure to share the activities your unit participates in, promotes, or hosts in support of National Preparedness Month.

Regards,

/CAPT Rob Tosatto/

CAPT Rob Tosatto
Director, Medical Reserve Corps Program
Office of the Surgeon General

Orange County MRC Receives National Recognition

In an awards ceremony held on July 14, The Orange County MRC (CA) was presented with an Achievement Award by the National Association of Counties (NACo). NACo Achievement Awards recognize effective and creative county programs that promote quality and responsive county government and administration. Ninety-seven counties from 27 states participated in this year's NACo Achievement Award program. One of seven winning submissions from the County of Orange, the Orange County MRC was nominated by its housing organization, the County of Orange Healthcare Agency.

Winning programs, such as the Orange County MRC, garner national recognition and become part of a “storehouse” of county success stories to be passed on to other counties. “This award means a lot to the MRC,” said Terre Duensing, Division Manager of the County of Orange Health Care Agency/Health Disaster Management. “It shows they (more than 400 Orange County MRC volunteers) are valued.” For more information about the NACo awards or how to submit a nomination for the 2008 awards, visit www.naco.org. ★

Local Volunteer Organizations Come Together to Learn About All Hazards Preparedness

Nearly 200 disaster volunteers convened in Hampton Roads, Virginia, for the second annual Disaster Volunteer Day sponsored in part by the Virginia MRC. Numerous informational sessions, demonstrations, and information tables provided participants the opportunity to learn about state and regional emergency planning, personal preparedness responsibilities, and how local volunteers can respond collaboratively.

“Collaboration is so important,” said Jennifer Freeland, Peninsula MRC Coordinator. “People are willing to come to the table, but they don’t always have the opportunity to.” Numerous volunteer organizations from Hampton Roads, the southeastern region of Virginia, were given the opportunity to join together for this training event. Organizations included multiple CERT teams, Salvation Army, Virginia Baptist Mission, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, numerous churches, and five chapters of the American Red Cross, among others. Volunteers from all organizations had the opportunity to interact, learn about each other’s roles, and broaden their knowledge about *all* public health emergencies in an area that often focuses on disaster preparedness.

MRC Webinar Series

The next MRC Webinar is scheduled for September 11. Led by Ed Kantor, MD, of the University of Virginia MRC, this Webinar will cover psychological first aid. Visit <http://webcasts.naccho.org/series.php?id=225> for more information or to register for this Webinar.

Learning sessions focused on all hazards emergency preparedness with topics such as pandemic influenza, the Strategic National Stockpile, animals in disaster, and helping those with special needs. Participants also practiced collaboratively as a point of distribution (POD)

“Volunteers from all organizations had the opportunity to interact, learn about each other’s roles, and broaden their knowledge about all public health emergencies...”

was set up and four MRC units worked together to dispense “medication.” Other demonstrations included a mobile command bus, a decontamination and wash-down tent by the regional HazMat team, and a mobile kitchen operated by local churches.

This event was made possible by the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Citizen Corps, the Virginia MRC, and Liberty Baptist Church. Participation increased almost 60 percent from last year, and many who participated stated they would return next year. Ms. Freeland, who coordinated this event, is already making plans for next year when she hopes to open the event to the general public and provide even more information about all public health emergencies. ★

Photos courtesy of Leonard Taubam, Peninsula MRC Volunteer and William Berg, MD, Director of the Hampton Health Department

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One-Two Punch by Mother Nature...

These volunteers spent more than 250 hours helping deliver more than 2,000 tetanus shots. Even when finding volunteers on short notice seemed like a challenge, more volunteers than needed were willing to go, and some even took time off work to help.

Following the response, the need to be prepared was one lesson these MRC units took home with them. “What you see on TV and what’s there are very different. Being there is overwhelming,” said Ellen Bayhyle, Sedgwick County MRC Coordinator. She recommends four things that are necessary for volunteers before they respond to a disaster: current immunizations, plans for deployment such as a home care plan, CERT and ICS training, and Basic Disaster Life Support training. Training can help volunteers, many of whom have never experienced a disaster, understand what to expect in a disaster zone—dust, debris, power outages, and other threats. Training for disasters not only mentally prepares volunteers, but can keep them safe in a potentially dangerous environment. ★



The damage following the F5 tornado in Greensburg, Kansas is extensive.



MRC Volunteer, Pat Olson, serves as greeter for a POD exercise.

The Peninsula MRC promotes the MRC with a display table.



Participants browse numerous information tables.

Bergen County MRC Prepares for Mass Care Triage

When one of the greatest sports and entertainment complexes in the world—one that spans 750 acres, includes Giants Stadium, and hosts 200 events attracting more than 2 million people annually—is located in your county, you need to be prepared to provide mass care. To prepare for an incident at the Meadowlands Sports Complex, the Bergen County MRC (NJ) was selected as one of two pilot programs in New Jersey to have a fully stocked mass casualty response trailer that would be ready to deploy for mass care triage at a moment's notice.

Donated by the New Jersey State Police Office of Emergency Management Citizen Corps Office, the trailer came to the Bergen County MRC with the triage supplies needed to set up an external treatment center. It also included a generator, lighting equipment, and blankets.

Ten MRC volunteers recently participated in an inventory of the trailer and subsequent table top discussion. Participants examined the trailer's contents to determine if any additional supplies are needed and how the trailer could best be used by the MRC. Having this trailer adds another element to this MRC, a unit that is comprised almost solely of healthcare workers. Before, this MRC unit focused on providing surge capacity including mass prophylaxis. Now, with this additional resource, the Bergen County MRC can expand their capacity to provide mass casualty response. ★



Ten MRC members participate in an inventory of the trailer's contents.



The Bergen County MRC trailer is fully stocked and ready for mass care triage.

Spread the Preparedness Message This September

September marks the fourth annual National Preparedness Month, a nationwide effort organized by the Department of Homeland Security to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies. The MRC can play an important role in National Preparedness Month by providing information, hosting events, and sponsoring activities that spread emergency preparedness messages and promote action throughout the community.

The following are suggested activities for MRC units during this year's National Preparedness Month:

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Linking the MRC and the Cities Readiness Initiative

NACCHO The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recently assisted with the coordination of four Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) meetings. Each meeting brought together local, state, and federal CRI planners to discuss preparing metropolitan areas to effectively respond to a large-scale bioterrorist event by dispensing antibiotics to their entire identified population within 48 hours.



At each meeting, MRC representatives educated CRI planners about how the MRC can be incorporated into—and benefit—their CRI plan. With 72 CRI-designated cities (at least one in each state encompassing more than 500 counties), CRI plans cover more than 163 million people, or 56 percent of the U.S. population. With this many people to dispense antibiotics to in only 48 hours, staffing becomes a major concern for CRI planners and a great way to integrate your MRC into CRI and Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) plans.

Communication with a local CRI planner can result in great opportunities for MRC volunteers including training, defined roles during a bioterrorism event, and potential funding. For information about how to contact your local CRI or SNS planner, visit www.bt.cdc.gov/cri or e-mail mgriffin@naccho.org at NACCHO. ★

- Participate in and distribute preparedness information at health fairs and expos.
- Include emergency preparedness information in e-mails and newsletter articles.
- Work with neighborhood associations to distribute preparedness information.
- Sponsor an emergency preparedness seminar or disaster preparedness training.
- Participate in emergency preparedness exercises and drills.
- Coordinate a press conference with other community organizations such as the local health department, emergency management office, American Red Cross, mayor, etc., to promote National Preparedness Month.

For more information about National Preparedness Month and the Department of Homeland Security's Ready Campaign, visit www.ready.gov. ★

National Preparedness Month

This year, National Preparedness Month will focus on four different areas of emergency preparedness:

- September 1–8: Back-to-school preparedness
- September 9–15: Business preparedness
- September 16–22: Multicultural preparedness
- September 23–30: Home and family preparedness

MRC Spotlights

Volunteer Spotlight

“Unbelievable energy and heart” is how some describe this quarter’s volunteer in the spotlight. Terry Strain, MRC Coordinator of the Northwest Louisiana MRC, has worked tirelessly to integrate the MRC into the local response system in Louisiana. She has recruited more than 150 volunteers, most of whom are medical professionals. Ms. Strain is currently working with the Shreveport Regional Metropolitan

Medical Response System to complete the Rapid Response Medical Module, a “clinic in a box,” to enhance the response capability of the Northwest Louisiana MRC by decreasing time between activation and deployment.

Ms. Strain, a physician assistant, works full time as a member of the internal medicine clinical faculty at the Louisiana State University School of Medicine. She also founded and volunteers at a free clinic treating patients in the clinic and on “housecalls” into homeless encampments in the area. She has

been a member of the MRC since 2003 and Coordinator since 2006.

Unit Spotlight

This quarter’s unit spotlight is on the Chatham Family Resource Center (CFRC). Officially recognized as an MRC unit in 2003, the CFRC has been a direct service provider to needy families since 1994. The CFRC MRC, now a Citizen Corps Council program, focuses on whole community preparedness for disasters. The unit provides outreach and education to

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Maintaining the MRC Identity

The MRC logo is an important aspect of the Medical Reserve Corps identity. It is up to local MRC units to help maintain the integrity of this identity. When using the MRC logo, please keep the following in mind:

- All uses of the MRC logo must be pre-approved by the MRC Program Office. 
- The MRC logo may be, and is encouraged to be, used in conjunction with other logos such as the local MRC unit’s logo, housing organization logo, etc.
- The MRC logo may not be altered in any way: no part of the logo may be cropped, no colors may be changed, and nothing can be embedded in the logo itself.
- Local MRC units may include the name of the city, county, or MRC in a font *other than* Verdana, the official MRC font.
- A high-resolution file of the MRC logo must be used and can be obtained from the MRC Program Office. Do not copy and paste the image from the Internet.

For more information, visit:

www.medicalreservecorps.gov/MemberResources/MRCLogo, or contact Grace Middleton at grace.middleton@hhs.gov



September is **National Preparedness Month**

GET PREPARED. GET INVOLVED.

VISIT WWW.READY.GOV

Ready 





Legislative Update

It's summer in Washington, and activity is heating up on Capitol Hill. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed its FY08 Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS)-Education funding bill on June 21, and the House Appropriations Committee passed its bill on July 11. State and local emergency preparedness cooperative agreement grants received \$760 million in the Senate and \$734 million in the House.

The bill totals \$151 billion, which is a modest 4.8 percent increase overall for public health programs in the bill, most of which have experienced significant cuts, lost purchasing power, or both during the past 3 years. Support is needed from as many Members of Congress as possible to demonstrate broad support for this bill. ★

Staff Profile

Lieutenant Dean R. Trombley recently joined the MRC program as a Program Officer. Some of his many responsibilities include registering new units, overseeing the MRC work groups, assisting with talking points and briefing materials, and participating in partnership activities with Federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and professional associations.

LT Trombley came to this position from the Navajo Area, Indian Health Service Hospital at Chinle, Arizona, where he worked as a Speech Language Pathologist. He is an active member of the Civil Air Patrol, where he retains the rank of Major. LT Trombley has received multiple qualifications to include air crew, ground team search and rescue, communications, and various ICS positions.

Prior to working with Public Health Service, LT Trombley served on active duty in the United States Navy, Army Reserve, and Navy Reserve for 13 years and was activated for Operation Desert Shield/Storm.

LT Trombley joined the Public Health Service in 2005. He holds a masters degree in Communication Disorders and Sciences from Plattsburgh State University in New York. ★

MRC Self-Paced Training Courses for Medical and Non-Medical Volunteers CD-ROM

This CD-ROM, produced by the Southwest Center for Advanced Public Health Practice at Tarrant County Public Health, is a self-paced training designed for MRC volunteers, both medical and non-medical. The CD-ROM contains slide set modules, videos, links to online trainings, and a post-test.

The training materials were created from a variety of government and university sources specializing in the topic areas. To obtain a copy or download the training, visit:

www.texasapc.net/EmergencyPreparedness/APCCourses/MRC/tabid/165/Default.aspx

Manalapan Township MRC Builds Sustainability by Giving Ownership to Volunteers

The Manalapan Township MRC is building its organization with the help of its own volunteers. Structured by committee, tasks that were once for an individual leader are now the responsibility of its volunteers. This organizational model not only engages volunteers—giving them a sense of ownership—but it also helps the MRC be less dependent on paid staff.

Organized into five main committees and seven sub-committees, volunteers have the option to join any committee that is of interest to them regardless of their background. Although volunteers aren't required to join a committee, it is encouraged.

Each committee is led by an active volunteer who devotes a few hours per month, communicates actively with his or her committee, and attends a monthly steering committee meeting. This organizational model is helping the Manalapan Township MRC move toward becoming a self-sufficient, volunteer-run organization. ★

Manalapan Township MRC's Committees:

Membership (coordinates recruiting)

- Identification Badges (oversees production)
- Communications (maintains call lists)
- Membership Recognition (oversees recognition items)
- Safety (develops safety guidelines)
- Security (oversees security at events)

Training (develops drills and exercises)

- Public Relations (may serve as a media contact)

Supplies (oversees inventory)

- Trailer (maintains a list of drivers)

Intra/Inter-Agency (serves as a liaison to response agencies)

Fundraising (develops strategy)

MRC Spotlights

the public in addition to being a catalyst for better agency coordination, which leverages total resource capacities for disaster response. In this role, the CFRC MRC conducts multi-agency conferences and exercises to help clarify responsibilities among diverse first responders.

The 68-member CFRC MRC is located in a medically underserved area of North Carolina, where more than 50 percent of the population speaks only Spanish. To address the needs of this population, the CFRC MRC developed the “Interpreter Corps” to promote awareness and communicate with the Spanish-

speaking population during an exercise or disaster.

Organization Spotlight

Finally, the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM) is this quarter’s organization in the spotlight. ISPRM works to help improve the quality of life of people with impairments and disabilities. Following Hurricane Katrina, a committee of ISPRM launched the humanitarian initiative, “Operation Functional Recovery,” to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina with neurological, musculoskeletal, and developmental disabilities. Volunteers of Operation Functional Recovery remain ready and willing to assist communities during future public health responses. ★

Help Raise Diabetes Awareness This November

More than 20 million Americans are living with diabetes; nearly 1 in 3 do not know they have the disease. As Ambassadors to the Surgeon General, members of the MRC can play an important role in raising awareness about this chronic and, often times, preventable disease. November marks Diabetes Awareness Month and serves as an opportunity for MRC volunteers to be more involved in public health activities in their community. Diabetes awareness activities for MRC volunteers might include:

- Partnering with a local blood drive, Lions Club, or church to offer diabetes screenings
- Offering educational seminars on healthy eating or physical fitness
- Distributing educational information at health fairs
- Volunteering at a local diabetes clinic

For more information about diabetes or events taking place in your community, visit www.diabetes.org. ★



We Want to Hear from You!

We need your help to make this newsletter informative, interesting, and beneficial to MRC units nationwide. Share news, ideas, interesting stories, and best practices, or tell us about outstanding volunteers.

Submittal Guidelines:

- Please include contact information (e-mail and telephone number) for followup.
- If you include photos, please send as a high-resolution JPEG, TIF, or EPS attachment.
- Digital cameras should be set for a high-quality image using the maximum megapixel setting available.
- Photo submissions also should include a caption or description of the event.

E-mail us at: MRCnewsletter@naccho.org

★ ★ ★ A Look Ahead ★ ★ ★



September

National Preparedness Month
www.ready.gov

America on the Move’s September Campaign
www.americaonthemove.org

National Cholesterol Education Month
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

7–11 American Association of Medical Assistants Convention
www.aama-ntl.org/convention/2007/Convention.aspx

11 MRC Webinar: Psychological First Aid
<http://webcasts.naccho.org/>

18 Take a Loved One for a Check-up Day
www.healthgap.omhrc.gov

18–21 National Association of Local Boards of Health Annual Conference
www.nalboh.org/confer/confmain.htm

26 The National Terrorism Preparedness Institute Webcast: “Live Response”
<http://ww2a.cdc.gov/PHTN/calendar.asp>

28–Oct. 2 NEMA 2007 Annual Conference
www.nemaweb.org

October

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
www.nbcam.org

2–5 Association of State and Territorial Health Officials 2007 Annual Meeting
www.astho.org

11–12 Emergency Preparedness Conference: Are You Ready?
<http://yalenewhavenhealth.org/emergency/disasterconference/>

November

American Diabetes Month
www.diabetes.org

4–7 American Public Health Association Conference
www.apha.org/meetings/

15 Great American Smokeout
www.cancer.org

27–29 National Prevention and Health Promotion Summit
www.cdc.gov/cochp/conference/index.htm

28 University of North Carolina Public Health Grand Rounds: Legal Preparedness
www.publichealthgrandrounds.unc.edu

